



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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About this newsletter

'Local Government and ABS' is a quarterly newsletter published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to help the Local Government Sector use statistics to assist with planning and other community servicing decisions.

This is a free newsletter and we encourage you to forward it to others and post it on your bulletin board. Anyone is welcome to receive 'Local Government and ABS' - for further details on how to subscribe see 'Newsletter and ABS Contact Details'.

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Review of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification

The background to the review of the current Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), a system of geographical coding through which statistical information is collected and disseminated, and a proposal for a new Australian statistical geography were presented in the following paper, which was released on 16 August 2007:

Review of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification, 2007 (cat. no. 1216.0.55.001)

The aim of this review is to identify the main issues associated with the current ASGC, and to offer some recommendations for a new Australian statistical geography which can better meet the contemporary and changing needs of users. Suggestions for a new ASGC were based on the need for a statistical geography which is capable of reflecting various aspects of the real world in more useful ways for statistical analysis and presentation.

This review is the result of numerous consultations between the ASGC Review Committee and a number of key ABS and external stakeholders. In response to the problems identified with the current ASGC, the ABS has developed a geographic statistical system of mesh blocks, which can be used as building blocks for larger statistical areas. A final proposal and report are expected to be released in late 2007.

Your Involvement in the Review

The ABS is interested in your comments on the proposal and the issues raised in this paper, particularly in regard to:

- the overall structure of the proposal;
- the boundary sets proposed for inclusion;
- the conceptual basis of the proposal;
- the impact of the proposal on you as either a supplier or user of spatial statistics;
- the timing of updates to the various elements of the new Australian statistical geography;
- what the ABS can do to minimise disruptions caused by change over from the ASGC to the new statistical geography; and
- whether the proposal meets your statistical needs.

The ABS is also interested in any comments you may have about definitions regarding rural and urban areas.

Any inquiries regarding the review can be addressed to geography@abs.gov.au with the words "ASGC Review" in the subject.

Formal written submissions can be sent to geography@abs.gov.au with the words "ASGC Review Submission" in the subject. The deadline for written submissions is **5 October 2007**.

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Future Directions of the ABS

Details of the future directions that the Australian Bureau of Statistics will be undertaking in the next three years are available in the latest ABS Forward Work Program, released on 8 August 2007:

Forward Work Program, 2007-08 to 2009-10 (cat. no. 1006.0)

The ABS work program is established in the context of the ABS mission to "assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by leading a high quality, objective and responsible national statistical service". In the development of the Forward Work Program, considerations such as input from user consultations, assessment of statistical demand and market potential, available resources (including time and effort), and the costs imposed on collection respondents in terms of time and effort were taken into account.

Key strategic directions for the 2007-08 to 2009-10 reference period include:

- upgrading the availability of regional statistics;
- improving the statistical value of administrative data;
- developing statistical standards and methodologies for both survey and administrative data;
- collaboration with key agencies in developing, updating and implementing Information Development Plans;
- enhancing and expanding current ABS statistics;
- playing a leadership role in the international statistical community;
- developing strategies to improve recruitment and workforce planning in the ABS; and
- continuous improvements in respondent management with a focus on reducing reporting burden.

For further information on these and other priorities refer to the Forward Work Program.

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Discover more about your local community

Do you want to have ABS data available on your website? Do you use ABS data in your reports?

The ABS encourages the use of its data within government and the community. Our current policy encourages this by allowing ABS data to be distributed on a non-charging public-access website without payment of licence fees. You may place data you have obtained free of charge from the ABS website, or data you have purchased from the ABS, on your website upon entering into a simple licensing arrangement with the ABS.

To date, in excess of 95 Local Government organisations have taken advantage of this free licence, and

have ABS data available on their websites for their local community to access. We can provide you with advice on the data that would best suit your needs and also ensure that you understand how to best use our data.

Some of the advantages of having ABS data on your website:

- people interested in your area can access a wide range of information from one central place;
- data are available to support local planning;
- the data can be tailored for your local area;
- information can be presented in a format that best suits your needs;
- it is a useful tool for local business; and
- a resource for students.

For further information please contact Colleen Tharme on telephone 02 6252 6998 or by email at <intermediary.management@abs.gov.au>.

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The 2011 Census - Your chance to have a say

While continuing to deliver more new and exciting products and services from the 2006 Census, the ABS is turning its attention to the next Census of Population and Housing to be held in August 2011.

The ABS will soon be inviting public comment on the content and procedures of the next Census. The invitation to have a say in the way the nation's largest statistical collection is undertaken is in the *Information Paper: Census of Population and Housing: ABS Views on Content and Procedures* (cat. no. 2007.0) to be released on **26 October 2007**.

This is the first in a series of information papers about the 2011 Census. It marks the first step in the public consultation process for 2011 and outlines ABS proposals for the next Census, including:

- procedures for conducting the Census;
- arrangements to protect the privacy of individuals;
- measures to ensure the confidentiality of the information collected;
- topics to be included;
- topics under review, including new topic proposals; and
- topics to be excluded.

In addition to providing copies of the Information Paper to people and organisations with an interest in Census data, the ABS will notify the public of the release of the Information Paper through:

- advertisements placed in major newspapers across the country
- media releases
- the ABS website

How do I make a submission?

Users of Census data and interested members of the public are invited to make submissions on any aspect of the Census. Submissions can be lodged either online, electronically by email or in hardcopy. The submission period will **open** on **26 October 2007** when the Information Paper is released and will **close** on **31 March 2008**.

The Information Paper and Submission Form will be available on the ABS website (for free download) at www.abs.gov.au/2011censusviews from **26 October 2007**. Information and guidelines about making a submission will also be available from the website.

Census information sessions

Information Sessions on 2006 Census products and 2011 Census Topic Consultation are planned for each

capital city during October and November 2007. These meetings are open to all interested members of the public and provide an opportunity to hear more about plans for the next Census, meet ABS staff and ask questions.

What happens next?

Following the assessment of submissions and consultation meetings, recommendations on the content and procedures of the 2011 Census will be discussed with the Australian Statistics Advisory Council later in 2008. The ABS will then prepare a submission to the Federal Government during 2009. A final decision on the 2011 Census topics is expected to be made by the Federal Government in late 2009. The ABS will then release a further Information Paper outlining the final nature and content of the 2011 Census.

All individuals or organisations who have made submissions will be advised of the final outcomes.

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Second release of 2006 Census Results

Customised tables of Census data covering all topics from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing are now available on request. Census products such as QuickStats, MapStats and Basic Community and Indigenous Profiles will be updated with the second release Census information, and available free of charge on the ABS website with a planned release date of 25 October 2007. Census Tables will be updated and released progressively from 25 October to December 2007.

2006 Census second release variables include:

Person Variables Community Development Employment Projects Participation

Employment Type

Government/ Non-Government Employer Indicator

Hours Worked

Industry of Employment

Labour Force Status

Level of Highest Educational Attainment

Method of Travel to Work

Non-School Qualification: Field of Study

Non-School Qualification: Level of Education

Number of Employees

Occupation

Place of Usual Residence Five Years Ago

Place of Usual Residence One Year Ago

Place of Work

Usual Address Five Years Ago Indicator

Usual Address One Year Ago Indicator

Household/Dwelling Household Five Year Mobility Indicator

Variables Household Income - Equivalised

Household One Year Mobility Indicator

For further information refer to: 2006 Census: proposed Product Release Dates.

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What's Happening in Local Government Finance?

Collections

During August and September 2007, electronic forms for the **Annual 2006-07 Local Government Finance Collection**, were despatched for all jurisdictions. This data collection is conducted in collaboration with the Departments of Local Government (DLG) and/or Grants Commissions (GC) in each state and territory.

This year the ABS has requested 4 (four) reconciliation data items be included for the compilation of a statement of Stocks and Flows for Local Government which will be published in *Government Finance*

Statistics, Australia (cat. no. 5512.0) in early April 2008.

The ABS return dates differ between jurisdictions, with some seeking information as early as mid-October 2007 and others due by the end of November 2007. Returning forms earlier than the due date will greatly assist both the DLG/GC and the ABS to achieve their data processing schedules.

The ABS also conducts a **quarterly** survey of financial information which was despatched to a selected sample of councils in the third week of September 2007. There have been no changes made to data items collected on the form. Responses to the quarterly survey are required by **8 October 2007** (6 working days after the end of the quarter). Early attention to getting the forms to the ABS will ensure that the financial activity of local government is accurately represented in Australia's National Accounts.

Other developments

Starting in the September 2007 quarter, the quarterly survey will form part of the ABS Economic Statistics Data Centre for the first time. The Economic Statistics Data Centre is also responsible for other collections, such as tourist accommodation and motor vehicle transport, and this move of the quarterly survey will ensure a consistent uniform service to providers throughout the ABS.

Contact

For further information or inquiries about Local Government Statistics, contact the Local Government Statistical Unit on (07) 3222 6022.

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Recent ABS Releases

Research Paper: Data Visualisation, Jul 2007 (cat. no. 1211.0.55.001)

This paper was released on 19 July 2007, and analyses existing data visualisation tools and techniques incorporating issues of statistical storytelling, and the benefits of displaying statistical data. Note that the opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the ABS. This paper builds upon the previously released paper, *Data Communication - Emerging International Trends and Practices of the Australian Bureau of Statistics* (cat. no. 1211.0).

Regional Population Growth, Australia, 1996 to 2006 (cat. no. 3218.0)

Released on 24 July 2007, this publication contains estimates of the resident population of Local Government Areas, Statistical Divisions, Statistical Districts, Remoteness Areas and states and territories of Australia at 30 June 1996, 2001 and 2006, according to the 2006 edition of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification. For the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory, estimates for Statistical Subdivisions are also included. Average annual growth rates are also available, along with various commentary on population change at different geographic levels.

Guide to Migrant Statistical Sources, 2007 (Edition 1) (cat. no. 3414.0)

This publication was released for the first time on 7 August 2007, and provides a ready reference to statistical sources either directly related to migrants and ethnicity or which are relevant to migrants and ethnicity. The guide refers to a variety of ABS and non-ABS collections, including government, academic and private sources, across a number of broad topics, including crime and justice, culture and leisure, education and training, family and community, health, labour, and housing.

Information about particular data sources can be accessed by searching by source title or topic. ABS and non-ABS sources are similarly presented, with an overview of the source, data items collected and their relevance to migrant statistics, details of outputs, geographic detail available where relevant, and contacts. Guide entries also refer to further information able to be accessed, and offers several links to these.

Water Use on Australian Farms, 2005-06 (cat. no. 4618.0)

Water Use on Australian Farms was released on 14 August 2007, and provides preliminary estimates of agricultural water use, pastures and crops irrigated, and sources of water used for agriculture at a national and state/territory level. Data is provided for the year ended 30 June 2006, based on data collected as part of the Agricultural Census. Estimates of total water use for 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 are also included. Final estimates for the national, state/territory and also regional level will be released in December 2007.

An Experimental Monetary Water Account for Australia, 2004-05 (cat. no. 4610.0.55.005)

Released on 15 August 2007, this publication presents experimental monetary water accounts for the year 2004-05. It matches these experimental monetary accounts with physical water accounts produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in *Water Account, Australia, 2004-05* (cat. no. 4610.0), which can be used to provide useful information for determining efficient water allocation, achieving cost recovery for water infrastructure assets and analysing trade-offs between alternative water and economic policies. This paper further discusses the gaps and deficiencies in these data that need to be addressed to provide a more complete monetary water account.

Population Distribution, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006 (cat. no. 4705.0)

This publication, released on 15 August 2007, provides a preliminary estimated resident population of all persons with Indigenous status for total Australia, and for all states and territories as at 30 June 2006, based on data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

Further information on the size and distribution of these preliminary Indigenous population estimates are available in **Australian Demographic Statistics, March 2007** (cat. no. 3101.0). The final estimated resident population of Indigenous persons will be released in mid 2008, and a time-series of Indigenous population estimates and projections will be released in August 2009 in *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1996 to 2016* (cat. no. 3238.0).

Cultural Funding by Government, Australia, 2005-06 (cat. no. 4183.0)

This publication, released on 23 August 2007, contains estimates of funding for arts and cultural activities, facilities and services by the three levels of government in Australia for the three years from 2003-04 to 2005-06. These estimates were compiled from administrative by-product data obtained by the ABS from annual reports and budget papers, and from information provided by selected Australian Government authorities (including the Australia Council), state and territory governments and local government authorities.

Government Finance Statistics, Australia, Quarterly, Jun 2007 (cat. no. 5519.0.55.001)

Released on 4 September 2007, *Government Finance Statistics, Australia* presents Government Finance Statistics (GFS) on an accrual accounting basis for the general government sector and the non-financial public sector. Data are available in an excel data cube in tables structured in GFS operating statement format.

Population by Age and Sex, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 3235.0)

This publication, released 24 July 2007, contains the estimated resident population by age (in five-year age groups up to '85 and over') and sex for each Statistical Local Area, Statistical Subdivision, Statistical Division and state and territory of Australia as at 30 June 2006, based on the 2006 edition of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification. Population estimates for Local Government and other areas can be derived from these estimates using Statistical Local Areas as a base. These estimates are preliminary for 2006, as are based on the results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, and are final for 2001 and 1996.

Building Approvals, Australia, Jul 2007 (cat. no. 8731.0)

Released on a monthly basis, *Building Approvals, Australia* provides data by Statistical Local Area in datacubes, including:

- the number and value of dwelling units approved by sector (public/private); and
- the number and value of new other residential dwelling units approved by type of building.

Seasonally adjusted and trend estimates by state are included for the number of dwelling units and value of building approved.

State and Regional Indicators, Victoria, Jun 2007 (cat. no. 1367.2)

This publication is released on a quarterly basis, and contains recently released statistical information about Victoria, sourced from ABS and non-ABS collections. Data is presented in a mix of tables, charts and commentary, and focuses on recent movements in key economic, social and environmental data. A number of different data items are available, such as Estimated Resident Population, State Final Demand, Labour Force Statistics, Price Indexes, Building Approvals, Air Quality, Water Storage, Condition of Main Roads, Recorded Crime Offences, Life Expectancy at Birth, and Government Owned Housing Stock for varying geographic classifications, including Local Government Areas.

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Newsletter and ABS Contact Details

This newsletter is one way to help improve communication between the ABS and the Local Government Sector. New ABS initiatives to assist local government organisations will be announced in this newsletter as they evolve.

We would appreciate receiving your views and suggestions about this newsletter so that it remains useful and assists you to understand and use ABS statistics. We would also welcome suggestions for articles that you feel should be included. Please email your comments and suggestions to regional.statistics@abs.gov.au or telephone (08) 8237 7369.

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For enquiries contact the **National Information and Referral Service** on 1300 135 070 or e-mail: client.services@abs.gov.au.

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